

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS ITEMS, SUNDAY, AUGUST 24

HEREWITH FULL TEXTS OF THREE ITEMS IN SUNDAY PRESS:

1. JAMES RESTON FROM HAVANA ENTITLED "THE MENTAL BLOCKADE"
2. CHALMERS ROBERTS IN WASHPOST OP-ED: "SECRETARY VS. CONGRESS"
3. WASHPOST EDITORIAL: "THE MIDDLE EAST; 'PEACE' IS NOT AT HAND"

1. THE MENTAL BLOCKADE, BY JAMES RESTON (HAVANA)

THERE IS A MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE IN CUBA THESE DAYS TOWARD THE UNITED STATES, BUT THAT'S ABOUT ALL. THE ECONOMIC BLOCKADE IS LIFTING, BUT AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS OF CUBAN COMMUNISM, THE MENTAL BLOCKADE REMAINS.

FIDEL CASTRO WAS 49 LAST WEEK, AND HE NOW HAS THE LOOK OF A MAN WHO IS BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THAT LIFE IS EVEN MORE COMPLICATED THAN HE FIGURED. HE SEEMS MORE COMPOSED AND QUIET NOW THAN WHEN I LAST SAW HIM HERE SIX YEARS AGO, BUT HIS EYES AND HIS COMMENTS ARE WARY.

FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS HE HAS BEEN GUIDING PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO ALL OVER THE WESTERN HALF OF THE ISLAND AMIDST IMMENSE CROWDS, BUT HE NEVER MADE A SINGLE SPEECH, AND EVEN GRUMBLED A LITTLE ABOUT BEING DRAGGED INTO A PRESS CONFERENCE.

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ENCE AT THE END OF THE VISIT. ALSO, HIS PRIVATE CONVER-

SATION ABOUT THE UNITED STATES IS STILL RESENTFUL, IF NOT AGGRESIVELY HOSTILE.

WHEN YOU ASK HIM ABOUT EXPORTING HIS REVOLUTION TO THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA, HE DENIES THAT REVOLUTION CAN BE EXPORTED AND INSISTS THAT IT IS THE U.S. THAT HAS BEEN EXPORTING COUNTERREVOLUTION TO CHILE, PANAMA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE HEMISPHERE.

WHEN YOU ASK ABOUT THE PARTIAL LIFTING OF THE U.S. ECONOMIC BLOCKADE, HE SAYS THIS IS A POSITIVE STEP, BUT THAT ALL RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES CAN BE RE-ESTABLISHED.

PARADOXICALLY, HE SPEAKS IN PRIVATE ALMOST RUEFULLY ABOUT THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BAY OF PIGS INVASION OF CUBA. PIERRE SALINGER, WHO WAS KENNEDY'S PRESS SECRETARY AT THAT TIME, WAS IN CUBA FOR THE ECHEVERRIA VISIT. MR. CASTRO RECEIVED HIM WARMLY AND EVEN SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT KENNEDY HAD BEEN ELECTED IN 1960. FOR IF MR. NIXON HAD BEEN PRESIDENT AT THE TIME OF THE BAY OF PIGS CRISIS, CASTRO ADDED, NIXON WOULD HAVE PROBABLY LANDED THE U.S. MARINES IN CUBA AND THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A MOST TERRIBLE GUERRILLA WAR.

MR. CASTRO SEEMS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITIES OF RECONCILIATION WITH THE FORD ADMINISTRATION -- MORE WILLING IN HIS PRIVATE TALK THAN IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS -- BUT EVEN HERE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION WOULD BE DIFFICULT.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN YOU RAISE THE SUBJECT OF COMPENSATION FOR THE U.S. PROPERTY HE EXPROPRIATED IN CUBA, MR. CASTRO SAYS THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO THE DAMAGE DONE TO CUBA'S ECONOMY BY THE U.S. ECONOMIC BLOCKADE OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS.

NEVERTHELESS, THE TWO SIDES ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT TALKING, AND THERE ARE SOME SIGNS HERE OF A DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE IF NOT YET A DIFFERENT POLICY. COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DOMINATES THE PRESS AND THE BILLBOARDS OF THE ISLAND, AS USUAL, BUT THE ANTI-YANKEE PROPAGANDA OF SEVERAL YEARS AGO HAS OBVIOUSLY DECLINED.

ON THE RAMPA -- THE MAIN STREET OF HAVANA FROM THE OLD UNCLASSIFIED

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HILTON HOTEL TO THE SEA-WALL -- THE MAIN PUBLIC ATTRACTIONS ARE AN EXHIBITION OF THE HISTORY OF THE "PARTIDO MARXISTA-LENINISTA DE CUBA" ANOTHER EXHIBITION OF REVOLUTIONARY PHOTOGRAPHS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND A MOVIE ABOUT THE RISE AND FALL OF ALLENDE IN CHILE. BUT THE HORROR PICTURES OF THE PAST ON AMERICAN "IMPERIALISM" HAVE ALMOST DISAPPEARED.

CASTRO DID UNVEIL THE OTHER DAY A MURAL WITH AN ANTI-CLERICAL, ANTI-AMERICAN THEME AT A LARGE NEW SCHOOL IN GUANES, NEAR PINAR DEL RIO, BUT IT ALSO FEATURED A QUOTATION FROM BENITO JUAREZ: "IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS AS WITH NATIONS, RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS IS

PEACE."

ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO, MR. CASTRO DID NOT INITIATE ANY CONVERSATION ABOUT THE U.S. OR ITS POLICY TOWARD CUBA IN FIVE DAYS OF CONVERSATION, BUT CONCENTRATED ON THE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF CUBA AND ITS DESIRE FOR MORE TRADE AND TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION WITH MEXICO AND THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA.

SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAS BEEN TRYING BY LIMITED TRADE GESTURES AND INDIRECT MESSAGES TO MAKE CLEAR TO CASTRO THAT THE UNITED STATES IS READY TO TALK AND BEGIN REMOVING THE MENTAL BLOCKADE. HIS THEME HAS BEEN THAT, IF WASHINGTON CAN REACH AT LEAST LIMITED ACCOMMODATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA, IT MAKES NO SENSE TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH ALMOST EVERY OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD EXCEPT ALBANIA AND CUBA.

THE WAY TO BEGIN, MR. KISSINGER HAS SAID, IS BY GETTING THE PRINCIPLES STRAIGHT, AND THEN GO ON FROM THERE TO THE SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AND HUMAN PROBLEMS -- IN DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND NOT MERELY WITH VISITING U.S. SENATORS AND REPORTERS.

AT NO TIME DURING MY LONG PRIVATE TALK WITH MR. CASTRO DID HE DIFFER WITH THIS APPROACH, BUT HE INSISTED THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT OIL EMBARGOES AGAINST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUE ITS DIRECT EMBARGO AGAINST THE SHIPMENT OF FOOD AND
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OTHER ESSENTIALS TO THE CUBAN PEOPLE. HE WAS WILLING TO TALK, HE SAID, BUT NOT TO REACH FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENTS UNTIL THE EMBARGO WAS LIFTED AND THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE TRADE ESTABLISHED.

THIS WILL CLEARLY TAKE A LONG TIME, BUT THE PROCESS OF REAPPRAISAL ON BOTH SIDES HAS AT LEAST BEGUN.

2. SECRETARY VS. CONGRESS, BY CHALMERS ROBERTS.
SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER'S RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS ARE AT A LOW EBB, SOMETIMES EVEN DESCRIBED IN PRINT AS "POISONOUS." HE COMPLAINED IN A RECENT SPEECH THAT "THE ADMINISTRATION IS HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR VIRTUALLY EVERY DIFFICULTY AROUND THE WORLD -- WHETHER OR NOT THEY

RESULTED FROM ITS POLICIES -- AND THEN IS HAMSTRUNG IN ITS CAPACITY TO ACT FLEXIBLY AND PURPOSEFULLY."

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE BEEN LAMBASTING HIM OVER HIS TURKISH POLICY, HIS ADVICE TO PRESIDENT FORD NOT TO SEE ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN, HIS TARDY STANCE ON PORTUGAL AND HIS POLICY OF DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION. SO FAR, HE

HAS WHEELED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET THE HOUSE TO UNDO THE EMBARGO ON ARMS TO TURKEY. HE HAS ASKED HIS CRITICS WHAT ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTE THERE CAN BE SHORT OF A RETURN TO THE COLD WAR. AND NOW HE HAS PROMISED THAT CONGRESS WILL VOTE FIRST BEFORE AMERICAN TECHNICIANS MAN THE LINE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT.

HISTORICALLY, SECRETARIES OF STATE TAKE A LOT OF HEAT FOR POLICIES OF THEIR PRESIDENTS, POLICIES THEY ARE SUSPECTED OF CONCOCTING IN THE FIRST PLACE. IT MAY NOT BE MUCH CONSOLATION TO KISSINGER TO POINT OUT THAT HE IS JUST ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF SECRETARIES WHO HAVE FELT THE HEAT -- OR WRATH -- OF CONGRESS IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II ERA. A GLANCE AT THE RECORD BEARS THIS OUT.

CORDELL HULL, WHO SERVED AS SECRETARY LONGER THAN ANY OTHER, HAD BEEN BOTH REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATOR. MOST EVERYBODY KNEW THAT PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT MADE MOST OF THE POLICY AND DURING THE WAR PATRIOTISM MUTED
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CRITICISM. BUT TOWARD WAR'S END HULL RAN INTO A SENATORIAL STORM WHEN HE SHOWED THE LEADERS THE PLAN FOR THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION (UNRRA) WHICH HE PROPOSED TO ESTABLISH THROUGH AN EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD TO DO A LOT OF CROW EATING AND FEATHER SMOOTHING TO DOWN SENATOR ARTHUR VANDENBERT'S CRY OF OUTRAGE THAT CONGRESS WAS BEING CONFRONTED WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI AND AN OPEN-ENDED DRAIN ON THE TREASURY. WHEN IT CAME TO THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, HULL KNEW HE HAD TO WORK HAND-IN-HAND -- AND HE DID -- WITH VANDENBERG AND SENATOR TOM CONNALLY TO AVOID A REPETITION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DISASTER.

HULL'S SUCESSOR, EDWARD R. STETTINIUS JR., WAS A LIGHT-WEIGHT AND EVERYBODY KNEW IT. HARRY TRUMAN INHERITED HIM FROM FDR AND BEFORE LONG DUMPED HIM FOR JAMES F. BYRNES. BYRNES HAD BEEN A SENATOR AND A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, AND HE SET OUT TO DEAL WITH THE RUSSIANS THE WAY HE HAD DEALT WITH FELLOW SENATORS. WHEN BYRNES PROPOSED AN EXCHANGE OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS AND SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION WITH THE RUSSIANS, IT SO UPSET THE SENATE THAT NINE MEMBERS MARCHED DOWN TO SEE PRESIDENT TRUMAN TO DEMAND "PROPER SAFEGUARDS" FOR THE ATOMIC SECRETS. BYRNES

HAD TO PULL BACK.

GENERAL GEORGE MARSHALL WAS A MAN OF SUCH PERSONAL PROBITY THAT HE ALONE OF ALL MODERN SECRETARIES WAS NEVER CHARGED WITH THE SLIGHTEST IMPROPRIETY UNTIL THE LATER ERA OF SENATOR JOSEPH MCCARTHY WHEN HE WAS ASSAULTED AND INSULTED BY THE RIGHT-WING REPUBLICANS WHO FOLLOWED

THE MCCARTHY LINE. HIS ENUNCIATION AND NURTURING OF
WHAT BECAME THE MARSHALL PLAN WAS A MASTERPIECE OF CONGRES-
SIONAL RELATIONS DURING THE REPUBLICAN CONTROLLED 80TH
CONGRESS. BUT THE TRUMAN-MARSHALL BIPARTISAN FOREIGN
POLICY DID NOT EXTEND TO THE FAR EAST AND "THE LOSS OF
CHINA" ERODED THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CONGRESS.

DEAN ACHESON COULD NEVER SUFFER BORES AND TO HIM,
CONGRESS WAS FULL OF THEM. FURTHERMORE, TO HIM,
VANDENBERG "HAD THE RARE CAPACITY FOR INSTANT INDIGNATION,
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OFTEN BEFORE HE UNDERSTOOD AN ISSUE." HE CAME TO
CONCLUDE "THAT TO ADVISE AND CONSULT WITH THE CONGRESS
IS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE" AND "TO DEVISE A JOINT APPROACH
TO A COMPLICATED AND DELICATE MATTER OF FOREIGN POLICY
IS NOT WITHIN THE RANGE OF NORMALLY AVAILABLE TIME AND
PEOPLE. HERE THE SEPARATION OF POWERS REALLY SEPARATES."

ACHESON GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE NIXON-MCCARTHY RED HUNT AND
THE KOREAN WAR AND HIS FINAL YEARS, LIKE THOSE OF THE
TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION IN GENERAL, WERE FULL OF FRUSTRATION
AND DEFENSIVENESS. IT WAS, AS GENERAL EISENHOWER AND
THE REPUBLICANS SHOUTED, "TIME FOR A CHANGE."

JOHN FOSTED DULLES, LIKE ACHESON BEFORE HIM AND KISSINGER
AFTER HIM, WAS A STRONG PERSONALITY WITH AN ABILITY,
GIVEN THE RIGHT CLIMATE, TO CHARM SENATORS AND REPRESEN-
TATIVES. HE SUFFERED, HOWEVER, FROM HAVING SPENT A FEW
MONTHS IN THE SENATE, BY APPOINTMENT TO A VACANCY, AND AT
FIRST HE BENT OVER BACKWARD TO APPEASE HIS RIGHT-WING
FELLOW REPUBLICANS. HE, AND PRESIDENT EISENHOWER, LET
MCCARTHY TEAR THE STATE DEPARTMENT APART. HE HAD A
TERRIBLE TIME JUSTIFYING A GENEVA MEETING AT WHICH THE
CHINESE COMMUNISTS ALSO WERE PRESENT AND TO HELP PROTECT
HIMSELF (AND FOR OTHER REASONS), HE BACKED THE NEW SOUTH
VIETNAM AFTER THE 1954 PARTITION OF THAT COUNTRY, A
CRITICAL STEP TO LATER ALL-OUT INVOLVEMENT. DULLES'
"BRINKMANSHIP" WAS TOO MUCH FOR MANY THOUGH HIS BARK WAS
TOUGHER THAN HIS BITE. CANCER FORCED HIM TO RETIRE
SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH.

CHRISTIAN HERTER WAS A CHARMING MAN, A FORMER HOUSE
MEMBER, BUT HE HAD LITTLE POWER IN THE LAST YEARS OF
THE EISENHOWER ERA. JOHN F. KENNEDY PICKED DEAN RUSK
OUT OF THE BLUE AND RUSK WAS HOBBLED BY HIS HOT AND
COLD WAR EXPERIENCES. HE ENDED UP IN A STATE OF MUTUAL
SUSPICION WITH THE CONGRESS, THOUGH HE, TOO, HAD STARTED
OUT ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE HILL.

RICHARD NIXON PICKED WILLIAM P. ROGERS, WHO HAD WORKED
FOR CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES. ROGERS AMIABLY DANCED

AROUND PROBLEMS WITH SOOTHING WORDS BUT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
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CAME TO BELIEVE HE OFTEN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. THIS WAS COUPLED WITH THE SUSPICION, LARGELY TRUE, THAT THE REAL FOREIGN POLICY POWER WAS KISSINGER, IN THE WHITE HOUSE. IN THAT HIDEOUT, KISSINGER MANAGED HIS RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS WITHOUT HAVING TO APPEAR IN PUBLIC ON THE HILL. HIS "SUPERMAN" REPUTATION CARRIED INTO HIS SECRET-ARYSHIP FOR A WHILE BUT THE FINALE IN VIETNAM AND THE FALL OF NIXON CRIMPED HIS POWER, AND HE, TOO, HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A MERE MORTAL.

THESE BITS AND PIECES OF HISTORY DO NOT PROVE THAT ALL THESE SECRETARYIES OF STATE WERE FAILURES; MANY OF THEM WERE HIGHLY CREATIVE POLICY MAKERS. BUT IT DOES DEMONSTRATE THAT THE DIVERSITY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY AS VIEWED SO OFTEN SO DIFFERENTLY BY A SECRETARY AND THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, GUARANTEES A SERIES OF RUNNING BATTLES BETWEEN THEM. HENRY KISSINGER IS JUST ANOTHER SECRETARY IN THAT RESPECT.

3. WASHPOST EDITORIAL, "THE MIDDLE EAST: 'PEACE' IS
NOT AT HAND"

SOMETHING THERE IS, AS ROBERT FROST WOULD SAY, THAT DOESN'T LOVE A NTCE, CLEAN-CUT DIPLOMATIC DEAL. IT COULD BE SOMETHING PECULIAR TO THE METHODS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER, OR SOMETHING THAT MAKES TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS UNIQUELY INTRACTABLE. MAYBE IT ISN'T AS NEW AND DIFFERENT AS IT LOOKS. WHATEVER THE CASE, WE RAISE THE SUBJECT TO SOUND A CAUTIONARY NOTE ABOUT THE DEVELOPING EGYPTIAN-ISRAELT AGREFMT ON A FURTHER DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES IN THE SINAI DESERT. AT THE RISK OF LEAPING TO PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS, WE HAVE THE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING THAT IF YOU LIKED THE VIETNAM CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT, WITH ITS SEPARATE, SECRET PRESIDENTIAL COMMITMENT TO UPHOLD IT BY THE USE OF FORCE,OR THE US-SOVIET TRADE AND JEWISH EMIGRATION "UNDERSTANDINGS," YOU MAY WELL GROW TO LOVE WHAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IS TRYING TO MULL TOGETHER IN HIS ATRBORNE EFFORT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

FROM EVERYTHING WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE DEAL THAT SEEKS TO BE RAPIDLY MOVING TO A CONCLUSION, IT WILL BE
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ANYTHING BUT CLEAN-CUT. INSTEAD, THE SIGNS SUGGEST ONE OF THOSE ARRANGEMENTS HELD TOGETHER BY THE FINE INVISIBLE WIRES OF CONTRADICTORY PROMISES HELD OUT TO CONFLICTING PARTIES, LOOSELY CONNECTED COMMITMENTS OF HEAVY AND

CONTINUING AMERICAN SUPPORT OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER"
UNACKNOWLEDGED UNDERTAKINGS QUIETLY MADE THROUGH THIRD
PARTIES, A HEAVY RELIANCE ON AMBIGUITIES, AND LAVISH
RESORT TO EUPHEMISMS AND CODE WORDS. IN SHORT, THE
EMERGING NEXT STEP TO "PEACE" IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS
ABOUT IT THAT ALL TOO FAMILIAR SUGGESTION OF THE QUICK
FTX TO BUY TIME, WHICH HAS PROVED TO BE SO DANGEROUS IN
THE RECENT PAST.

THERE WILL BE LESS DANGER AND MUCH TO BE GRATEFUL FOR,
OF COURSE, IF A FURTHER DISENGAGEMENT ON THE SINAI IS
PLAINLY RECOGNIZED FOR WHAT IT IS: A NECESSARY PRECON-
DTTTON TO FURTHER PROGRESS DOWN A VERY LONG HARD ROAD
TOWARD A GENUTNELY COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE
EAST -- A SETTLEMENT OF THE GRIEVANCES OF ALL PARTIES
CONCERNED ON TERMS, AND UNDER CONDITIONS, WHICH COULD
REASONABLY QUALIFY FOR THE DESIGNATION "PEACE." BUT
THERE WTLL BE VERY REAL DANGER IF, IN THE PREDICTABLE
EUPHORIA, THE PRESTDENT AND HIS AIDES CHOOSE TO TREAT AN
INTERIM DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT AS
SOME GREAT DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH THAT PROMISES INSTANT
STABILITY AND AN AUTOMATIC EASING OF TENSION IN THE
WORLD'S MOST PRECARIOUS TROUBLE SPOT. FOR A CASE
CAN BE MADE THAT ANOTHER INTERIM AGREEMENT, STRICTLY
LIMITED TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT, COULD BE A PRESCRIPTION FOR
GREATER TENSION, LESS STABILTY -- AND DIMINISHED
SECURITY FOR ISRAEL IN PARTICULAR -- IF IT IS NOT FOLLOWED
QUICKLY BY SUBSTANTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO REACH
THE KIND OF COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD DEAL WITH
THE REAL GRIEVANCES OF BOTH SIDES IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI
CONFLICT.

TO SEE WHY THIS IS SO, IT IS NECESSARY MERELY TO REMEMBER
THAT THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT HAS TO DO AT BOTTOM WITH
(1) THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE BORDERS
AND TO CO-EXIST IN A NORMAL WAY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, (2)
THE CLAIMS OF THE PALESTINIANS FOR RECOGNITION OF THEIR
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RIGHTS TO EXIST IN SOME SORT OF SOVEREIGN STATE, AND (3)
THE DEMANDS OF THE ARABS FOR A RETURN OF ALL ISRAELI-
OCCUPIED TERRITORY. THE IDEAL ANSWER, OBVIOUSLY, WOULD
BE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN ONE FELL SWOOP. THE
NEXT BEST ANSWER WOULD BE TO BUILD INTO THE NEXT STEP A
REASONABLY FOOL-PROOF PROCESS BY WHICH THE NEXT STEPS
WOULD BE TAKEN. INSTEAD, BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THERE WILL
BE NOTHING IN ANY NEW ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT THAT
OFFERS ANY ASSURANCE OF, FOR EXAMPLE, A FURTHER TENSION-
EASING DISENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ISRAELI AND SYRIAN FORCES
ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. THERE WILL BE NOTHING THAT OFFERS
ANY ASSURANCE OF AN EARLY ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE FUTURE
OF THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED WEST BANK OR TO DEAL WITH THE

PALESTINE ISSUE IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY. IT WILL BE GENERALLY "UNDERSTOOD," APPARENTLY, THAT ANOTHER GENEVA CONFERENCE ;ILL BE RECONVENED, PERHAPS EARLY NEXT YEAR, AND THAT THESE HARD QUESTIONS WILL BE TAKEN UP AT THAT TIME. BUT THERE WILL BE NO AGREED-UPON TIMETABLE FOR ANOTHER GENEVA MEETING. ON THE CONTRARY, THERE IS SOME REASON TO SUSPECT THAT SYRIA, ON THE ONE HAND, IS BEING ASSURED THAT ITS TURN WILL COME NEXT, WHILE ISRAEL IS SIMULTANEOUSLY BEING REASSURED THAT HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LEVEL OF AMERICAN AID IT RECEIVES WILL NOT BE REINTRODUCED AS LEVERAGE IN PURSUIT OF FURTHER MIDEAST ACCOMMODATIONS -- AT LEAST BEFORE NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS.

IT IS NOT, IN BRIEF, A PROMISING PROSPECT, HOWEVER WELCOME A FURTHER DISENGAGEMENT ON THE SINAI WILL BE. AND YET THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IS APPARENTLY GOING TO BE ASKED TO UNDERWRITE THE FUTURE STABILITY OF THE MIDEAST WITH UNDIMINISHED MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL AND A COMMITMENT FOR AN AMERICAN PRESENCE, TO CONSIST OF AS MANY AS 200 CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS IN THE DEMILITARIZED AREA BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES ON THE SINAI DESERT. WE HAVE NO QUARREL IN THEORY WITH EITHER COMMITMENT. THE

ISRAELIS MUST BE SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF AMERICAN MILITARY AID. JUST AS CLEARLY, THERE IS LITTLE VALIDITY IN THE "VIETNAM" ANALOGY, WHICH SOME PEOPLE ARE RAISING AS A BASIS FOR QUESTIONING THE INTRODUCTION OF AMERICANS TO UNCLASSIFIED

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MONITOR EARLY-WARNING DEVICES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT; WHAT WAS WRONG WITH OUR VIETNAMESE INVOLVEMENT WAS NOT THAT AMERICANS WERE INTRODUCED ON THE SCENE BUT THAT THEY WERE INTRODUCED NOT AS PEACEKEEPERS BUT AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS ON ONE SIDE OF THE CONFLICT.

TRUE, THERE ARE RISKS IN BOTH COMMITMENTS BUT THEY ARE RISKS WORTH TAKING IF THESE COMMITMENTS ARE MADE IN REINFORCEMENT OF AN URGENT, CONCENTRATED EFFORT TO MOVE ON TO WIDER AGREEMENTS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THE OTHER DAY OF A JOING SYRIAN-JORDANIAN MILITARY COMMAND, AND THE VIGOROUS DENUNCIATION BY BOTH SYRIA'S PRESIDENT ASSAD AND JORDAN'S KING HUSSEIN OF THE IMPENDING, SEPARATE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT, POINTS UP THE PERIL OF ALLOWING THE MIDEAST TO FESTER WITHOUT ATTENTION WHILE AN INTERIM DISENGAGEMENT ON THE SINAI IS CELEBRATED AS A POLITICAL PLUM FOR A CAMPAIGNING PRESIDENT AND AS A SIGN THAT SOMEHOW "PEACE"IS NOW AT HAND, OR EVEN MEASURABLY CLOSER.

SECRETARY KISSINGER AND THE FORD ADMINISTRATION ARE ENTITLED TO HIGH MARKS FOR WHAT THEY HAVE ALREADY

ACCOMPLISHED IN RESCUING THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT
NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE COLLAPSE OF LAST MARCH. THE
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN IS ENTITLED TO
PRAISE FOR THE WAY IT STARED DOWN ITS OPPOSITION AND
YIELDED IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS. EGYPT'S PRESIDENT SADAT
IS NO LESS TO BE COMMENDED FOR THE CONSIDERABLE RISK
HE IS RUNNING, BOTH AT HOME AND IN HIS RELATIONS WITH HIS
ARAB ALLIES, IN WORKING OUT A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH
ISRAEL. BUT THE DEVELOPING COALESCENCE BETWEEN JORDAN
AND SYRIA, AND PRESUMABLY THE PALESTINE LIBERATION
ORGANIZATION, THREATENS TO ISOLATE EGYPT AND OTHER MODER-
ATE ARAB ELEMENTS AND TO ENCOURAGE THE LOWEST COMMON
DENOMINATOR OF ARAB FRUSTRATIONS, MILITANCY AND INTRANSI-
GEANCE. THAT IS WHY THE PROSPECTIVE SINAI AGREEMENT WILL
ONLY BE WORTH CELEBRATING IF IS FOLLOWED BY A SWIFT
AND SERIOUS EFFORT TO GET ON WITH THE JOB OF PRODUCING
A COMPREHENSIVE MIDEAST SETTLEMENT. MAW

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